

PROFESSOR WIBBLEWORTH PRESENTS...

A MAGICAL GUIDE TO UK SLANG & USEFUL PHRASES VOL I

A FRIENDLY GUIDE FOR STUDENTS AND
VISITORS COMING TO THE UK

Everyday phrases

Money

Travel

Welcome to
the UK,
traveller!





Not slang?
Still useful!

NOT EVERYTHING IN THIS GUIDE IS SLANG.

Whether you are coming to **Cambridge** to study, visiting **London** for the first time, staying in student accommodation, booking a hotel, ordering food, catching a train, or wondering why everyone keeps saying “cheers” when nobody is holding a drink — **this first volume is for you.**

Some words are true slang, some are informal everyday phrases, and some are simply useful British English words. Together, they will help you understand everyday life in the UK. Use these phrases in shops, cafés, taxis, train stations, student halls, supermarkets, hotels and conversations with local people. This guide will help you feel much more at home in daily life, then continue with the **next volumes** to expand your British English even further.

EVERYDAY BRITISH PHRASES



1. "YOU ALRIGHT?" OR "ALRIGHT?"

This does not always mean someone thinks something is wrong. In the UK, "Alright?" often just means: **Hello. How are you?**

You can answer simply: "Yeah, good thanks. You?"

Example:

Local: "Alright?"

You: "Yeah, good thanks. You?"

You do not need to explain your whole day unless you want to.

2. "CHEERS"

This is one of the most useful UK words. It can mean:

- thank you
- goodbye
- a toast before drinking
- okay, got it

Examples:

"Cheers for your help."

Meaning: Thank you for your help.

"Cheers, see you later."

Meaning: Thanks/goodbye.



3. "TA"

A short, friendly way to say thank you.

Example: "Ta!"

Meaning: Thanks!

It is very casual and often used for small things, such as someone passing you a menu or holding a door.

4. "MATE"

A friendly word meaning friend, but people also use it with strangers in casual situations.

Examples:

"Thanks, mate."

"Excuse me, mate, is this seat taken?"

Use it carefully. It is friendly, but very informal.

5. "LOVELY"

British people use "lovely" all the time. It can mean nice, good, fine, kind, pleasant or simply "okay".

Examples:

"That's lovely, thank you."

Meaning: That is nice, thank you.

"Lovely weather today."

Meaning: Nice weather today.

"Lovely, see you at 3."

Meaning: Great, see you at 3.



6. "BRILLIANT"

This means excellent, great, or very good.

Example:

"That's brilliant, thank you."

You will hear it in shops, cafés, offices and universities.

7. "NO WORRIES"

This means:

- that is okay
- no problem
- you are welcome

Example:

You: "Sorry I'm late."

Friend: "No worries."



9. "A BIT"

British people often use "a bit" to make something sound softer.

Wibbleworth warning: sometimes "a bit" actually means "very". Tone matters!

Examples:

"It's a bit cold."

Meaning: It is quite cold.

"That's a bit expensive."

Meaning: That is expensive.

"I'm a bit tired."

Meaning: I am tired.

10. "KNACKERED"

This means very tired.

Example:

"I'm knackered after the flight."

Do not use this in formal writing, but it is common in speech.

11. "GUTTED"

This means very disappointed.

Example:

"I missed the train. I'm gutted."



12. "CHUFFED"

This means very pleased or proud.

Example:

"I passed my exam. I'm really chuffed."

13. "DODGY"

This means suspicious, unreliable, unsafe or poor quality.

Example:

"That website looks dodgy."

Meaning: That website looks suspicious.

14. "QUEUE"

A queue is a line of people waiting.

Example:

"There's a queue outside the café."

Wibbleworth's golden rule: in the UK, respect the queue. Do not push in.

15. "FAFF"

A "faff" is something unnecessarily complicated or time-consuming.

Example:

"Changing trains three times is a bit of a faff."

Verb form:

"Stop faffing about."

Meaning: Stop wasting time.



MONEY, SHOPPING AND PAYING FOR THINGS

1. "QUID"

"Quid" means pound or pounds.

Important: the plural is also quid, not "quids".

Examples:

"It costs ten quid."

Meaning: It costs £10.

"Can I borrow five quid?"

Meaning: Can I borrow £5?



2. "FIVER"

A fiver means £5 or a five-pound note.

Example:

"Lunch was only a fiver."

Meaning: Lunch cost £5.

3. "TENNER"

A tenner means £10 or a ten-pound note.

Example:

"The taxi was about a tenner."

Meaning: The taxi cost about £10.



4. "CASH"

Cash means physical money: coins and notes.

Example:

"Do you take cash?"

Meaning: Can I pay with physical money?

In many UK places, card and contactless payments are very common, but it is still useful to understand the word.

5. "CARD ONLY"

This means the shop, café or business does not accept cash.

Example:

"Sorry, we're card only."

Meaning: You must pay by card or phone payment.

6. "CONTACTLESS"

This means paying by tapping a bank card, phone or watch.

Example:

"Can I pay contactless?"

7. "CASHPOINT"

A cashpoint is an ATM.

Example:

"Is there a cashpoint nearby?"

8. "SKINT"

This means you have very little money.

Example:

"I can't go out tonight. I'm skint."

Very informal. Do not use in official situations.

9. "PRICEY"

This means expensive.

Example:

"That restaurant is a bit pricey."

10. "A RIP-OFF"

This means something is much too expensive or unfairly priced.

Example:

"£8 for a bottle of water? That's a rip-off."

11. "BARGAIN"

A bargain is a very good price.

Example:

"This coat was only £15. What a bargain!"

12. "CHEAP AS CHIPS"

This means very cheap.

Example:

"The bus fare was cheap as chips."

It is a playful phrase. Use it casually.



13. "SPLIT THE BILL"

This means each person pays part of the total.

Example:

"Shall we split the bill?"

In restaurants, friends often split the bill, though sometimes people pay only for what they ordered.

15. "SERVICE CHARGE"

A service charge is an amount added to a restaurant bill. It is usually optional, but always check the bill.

Useful phrase:

"Is service included?"

Meaning: Has the tip/service charge already been added?

14. "SPLASH OUT"

This means to spend extra money on something special.

Example:

"We splashed out on afternoon tea in Cambridge."

WIBBLEWORTH'S MONEY TIP

Before agreeing to anything expensive, ask:

"How much will it be altogether?"

This means: what is the full price, including extras?

Shall we split it?

Ask the total first!



TRAVEL, TRAINS, BUSES AND TAXIS

1. "TUBE"

The Tube means the London Underground.

Example:

"We'll take the Tube to King's Cross."

In Cambridge, there is no Tube. Wibbleworth travels by bicycle, bus, train and occasional magical gust of wind.

2. "BUS"

In many UK cities, buses are common for local travel.

Useful phrase:

"Does this bus go to the city centre?"



3. "COACH"

A coach is usually a long-distance bus.

Example:

"I'm taking a coach from London to Cambridge."

4. "TRAIN"

The train is used for travel between towns and cities.

Useful words:

Single = one-way ticket

Return = ticket to go and come back

Off-Peak = travel at less busy times, often cheaper

Platform = where you board the train

Carriage = one section of the train

Example:

"A return to Cambridge, please."

5. "OFF-PEAK"

Off-Peak tickets are usually cheaper, but you must travel at permitted times.

Useful phrase:

"Is this ticket valid on this train?"

Always check, because rules can change by route and train operator.

6. "RAILCARD"

A Railcard gives eligible travellers discounted train fares. Students and young adults often check whether they can get one.

Useful phrase:

"Can I use my Railcard with this ticket?"

Important: if you buy a Railcard-discounted ticket, you must have the correct Railcard with you when travelling.



7. "TAP IN" AND "TAP OUT"

This means using a contactless card, phone or travel card at a gate or reader.

Examples:

"Tap in at the start of your journey."

"Remember to tap out."

In London, tapping correctly matters. If you do not tap properly, you may be charged more.

8. "OYSTER"

An Oyster card is a travel smartcard used in London.

Example:

"Can I top up my Oyster?"

To top up" means to add money or credit.

9. "CAB" / "TAXI"

A cab and a taxi usually mean the same thing in everyday speech.

Example:

"Let's get a cab."



10. "BLACK CAB"

A black cab is a traditional licensed London taxi. Despite the name, it may not always be black.

Example:

"We got a black cab from the station."

11. "MINICAB"

A minicab is a private hire vehicle. It normally must be booked in advance through a licensed company or app.

Wibbleworth warning: do not get into an unbooked minicab from the street. Use a licensed taxi, a black cab, a trusted app or a properly booked private hire vehicle.

12. "UBER"

Many people use "Uber" to mean app-based taxi travel, even if they are talking about similar services. Availability depends on location.

Example:

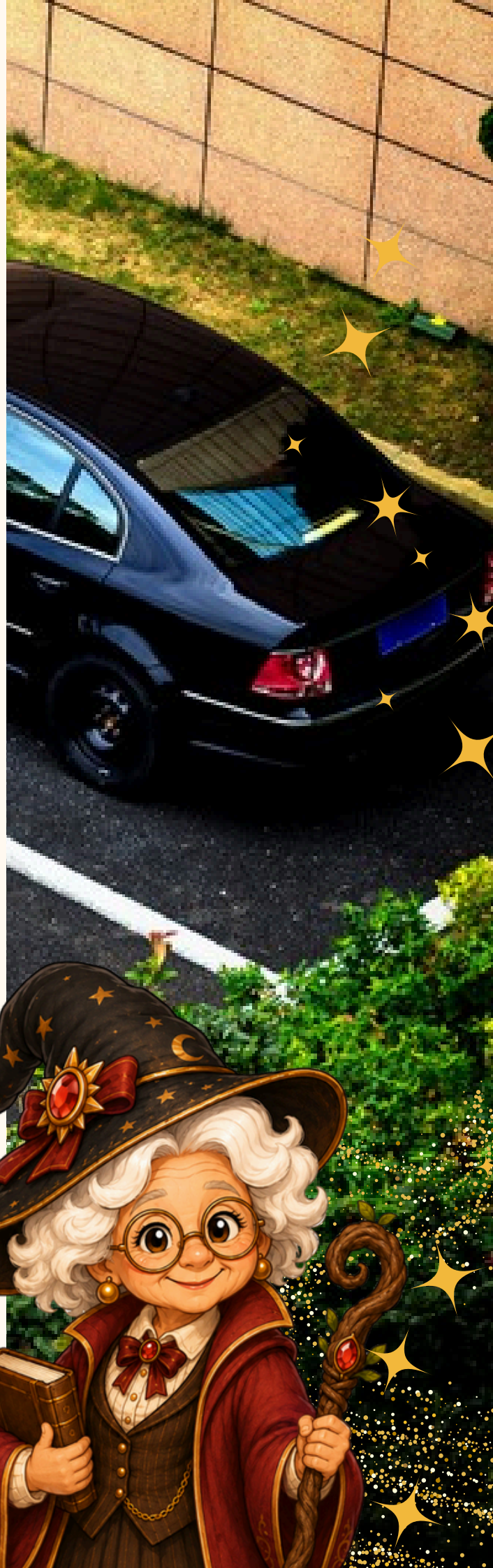
"Shall we get an Uber?"

13. "ZEBRA CROSSING"

A zebra crossing is a black-and-white pedestrian crossing.

Example:

"Cross at the zebra crossing."





USEFUL TRAVEL PHRASES

“Where’s the nearest bus stop?”

“Which platform is the train to Cambridge?”

“Is this the right train for London?”

“How much is a taxi to the station?”

“Can I pay by card?”

“Could you drop me here, please?”

14. “LIFT”

In British English, a lift means an elevator.

Example:

“Take the lift to the third floor.”

But “a lift” can also mean a ride in someone’s car.

Example:

“Can you give me a lift to the station?”

15. “PAVEMENT”

In British English, the pavement is the pedestrian walkway beside the road. In American English, this is often called the sidewalk.

Example:

“Walk on the pavement.”

Pavement, not sidewalk!



YOUR JOURNEY STARTS HERE

This is just the beginning. The more British English you learn, the more confident you will feel in everyday situations—from shopping and travelling to making friends and studying at university. Keep practising these words and phrases whenever you hear them, and don't forget to explore **the rest of this guide series** [here](#).

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An illustration featuring three characters against a dark blue background with yellow stars and sparkles. On the left is a wizard with a long white beard, glasses, and a blue robe with a red and white striped bow tie. He wears a blue wizard's hat with yellow stars and a small Union Jack flag hanging from the side. In the center is a brown bear wearing a blue sailor-style collar with a red and white striped bow tie. On the right is a witch with white curly hair, glasses, and a red robe with a dark vest and a red bow tie. She wears a black witch's hat with yellow stars, a crescent moon, and a red ribbon with a gold star. She is holding a white teacup with gold stars. A white speech bubble with a black outline points from the wizard to the bear, containing the text "Marvellous, young scholar!".

Marvellous,
young scholar!